2

Corridor Setting and Current Physical Conditions

2 Corridor Setting and Current Physical Conditions

2.1 Regional Setting

Contra Costa County extends approximately 40 miles from west to east and approximately 20 miles from north to south. The County covers a total of 805 square miles, of which approximately 732 square miles are land and the remainder, water areas. The County is bordered by Alameda County to the west and south, San Joaquin County to the east, Sacramento and Solano Counties to the north, and San Francisco Bay to the northwest. The County is usually considered to comprise three distinct subareas, West County, Central County, and East County. The Iron Horse Corridor traverses Central County and extends from Concord to the Alameda County line in San Ramon.

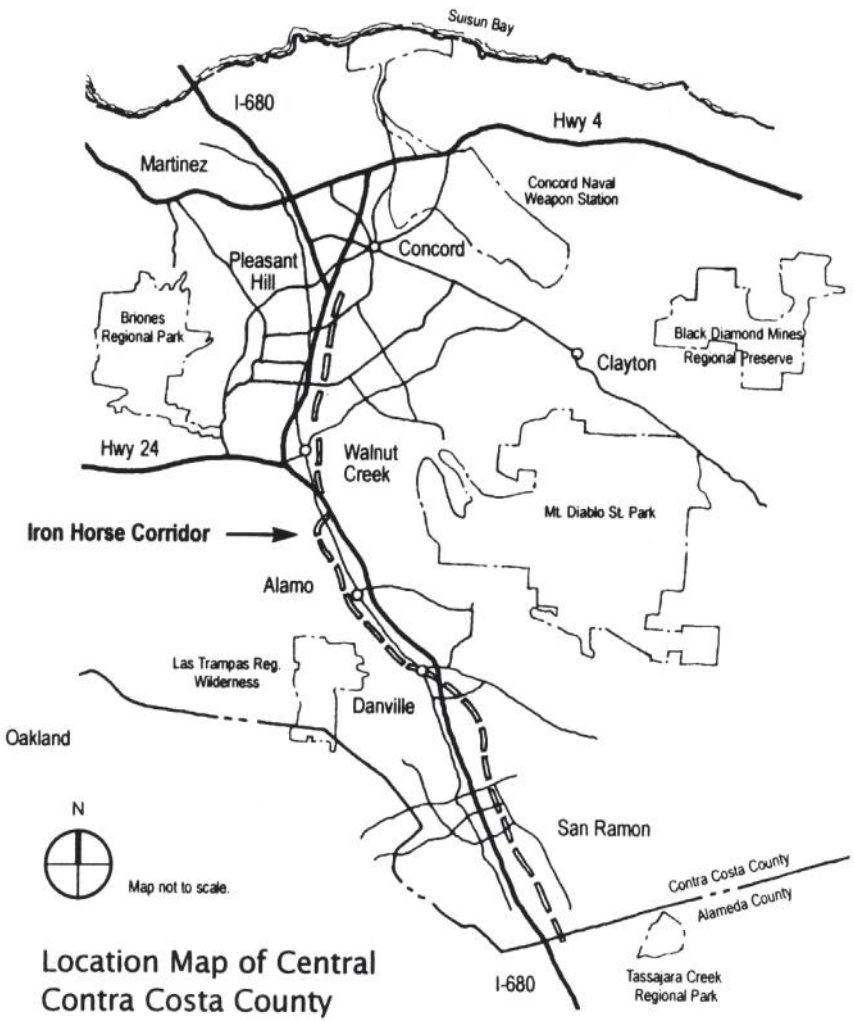
2.2 Corridor Description

The corridor is approximately 18.5 miles long extending from Mayette Avenue in Concord to the Alameda County line in San Ramon. The corridor traverses the following jurisdictions from north to south: City of Concord, City of Pleasant Hill, Pleasant Hill BART Station area (unincorporated); City of Walnut Creek; Alamo (unincorporated); Town of Danville; and City of San Ramon.

The County has a detailed "Record of Survey" which indicates easements, property line locations, and the precise location of underground utilities. For this document, the County's parcel map has been used to illustrate the corridor's location and adjacent land uses. This map begins on page II-3.

2.3 Existing Habitat and Vegetation

With some exceptions, there are few areas of native or high value habitat along the corridor. Most creeks in the vicinity of the corridor are in concrete channels. In San Ramon, there is a trapezoidal, rip-rapped flood control channel adjacent to the corridor south of Pine Valley Road. Also in San Ramon, a drainage area within the corridor at Bishop Ranch has significant wetlands value and has been preserved under guidance from the California Department of Fish and Game.



Location Map of Central Contra Costa County

The corridor has a diversity of existing vegetation types. Some segments have little or no trees or shrubs and only annual grasses. Other areas have dense tree and shrub plantings along the edges of the corridor. There is a wide range of tree species along the corridor which include deciduous fruit and nut trees, eucalyptus, oaks and pine trees. There are few landscaped or cultivated areas formally maintained by public or private entities. In some areas, trees or shrubs have been planted close to the edge of the right-of-way to screen buildings from the trail. No particular landscape pattern or plant types characterize the entire 18.5-mile corridor.

2.4 Adjacent Uses and Community Resources

The corridor's adjacent area primarily consists of residential, commercial, institutional land uses, and public infrastructure such as creek channels and streets. At-grade street crossings occur approximately every 800 to 1,200 linear feet. In some areas, the corridor extends for close to a half mile without street intersections. Throughout the corridor there are links to adjacent neighborhoods and parks and schools. Some retail or local-serving businesses are directly adjacent to the right-of-way.

Corridor Land Use Maps

The Iron Horse Corridor is mapped here on the County's parcel map with a conceptual indication of adjacent land uses. *Note: the land uses may not necessarily be accurate or reflect recent changes. Consult the relevant jurisdiction's zoning codes and land use maps for accurate information.*

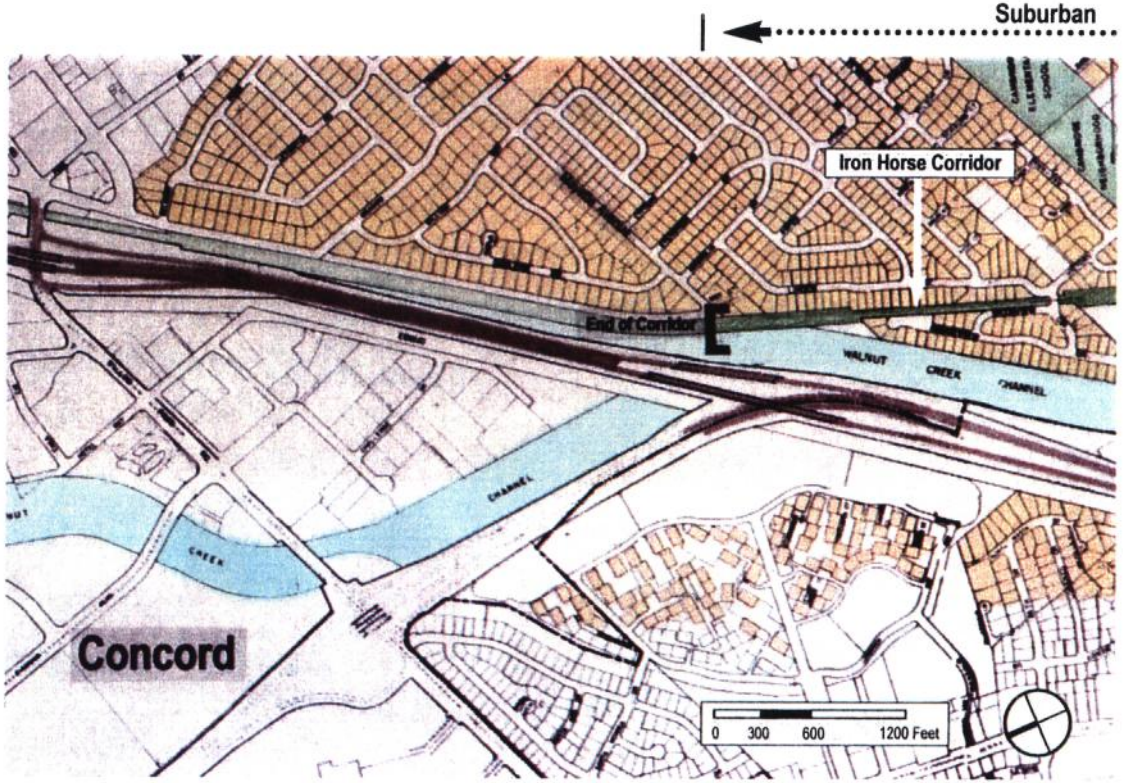
The Contra Costa County General Plan designates the corridor as "Utility and Open Space."

Map Legend

- Residential
- Parks/Schools
- Institutional
- Retail
- Office/Job Center
- Landscape Region Type (Defined in Chapter 3)

Map 1 - Northern Terminus of Corridor at Mayette Avenue in Concord

Looking north from Monument Boulevard.

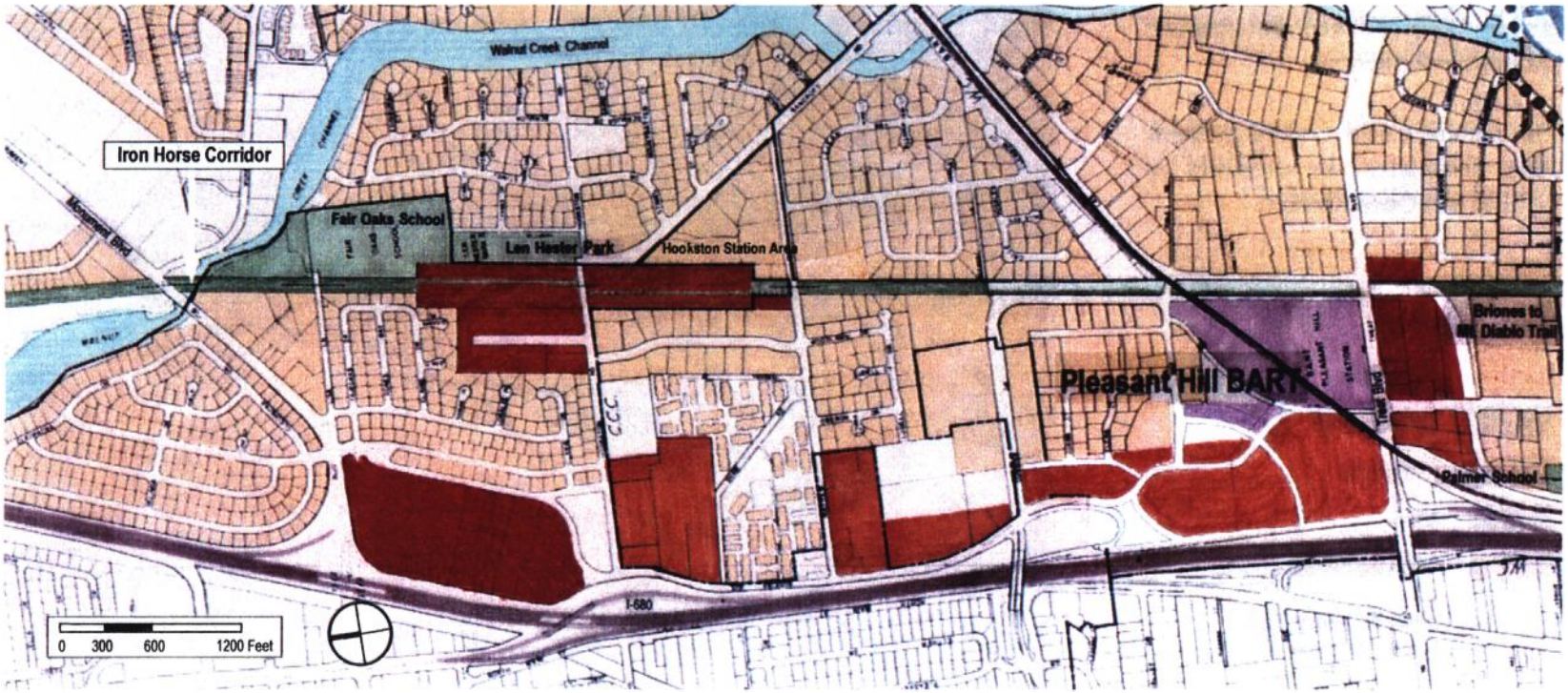


Map 2 - Monument Blvd. to Pleasant Hill BART

Facing south from the pedestrian bridge at Monument Boulevard.

Residential
Parks/Schools
Institutional
Retail
Office/Job Center

Suburban ..... Suburban

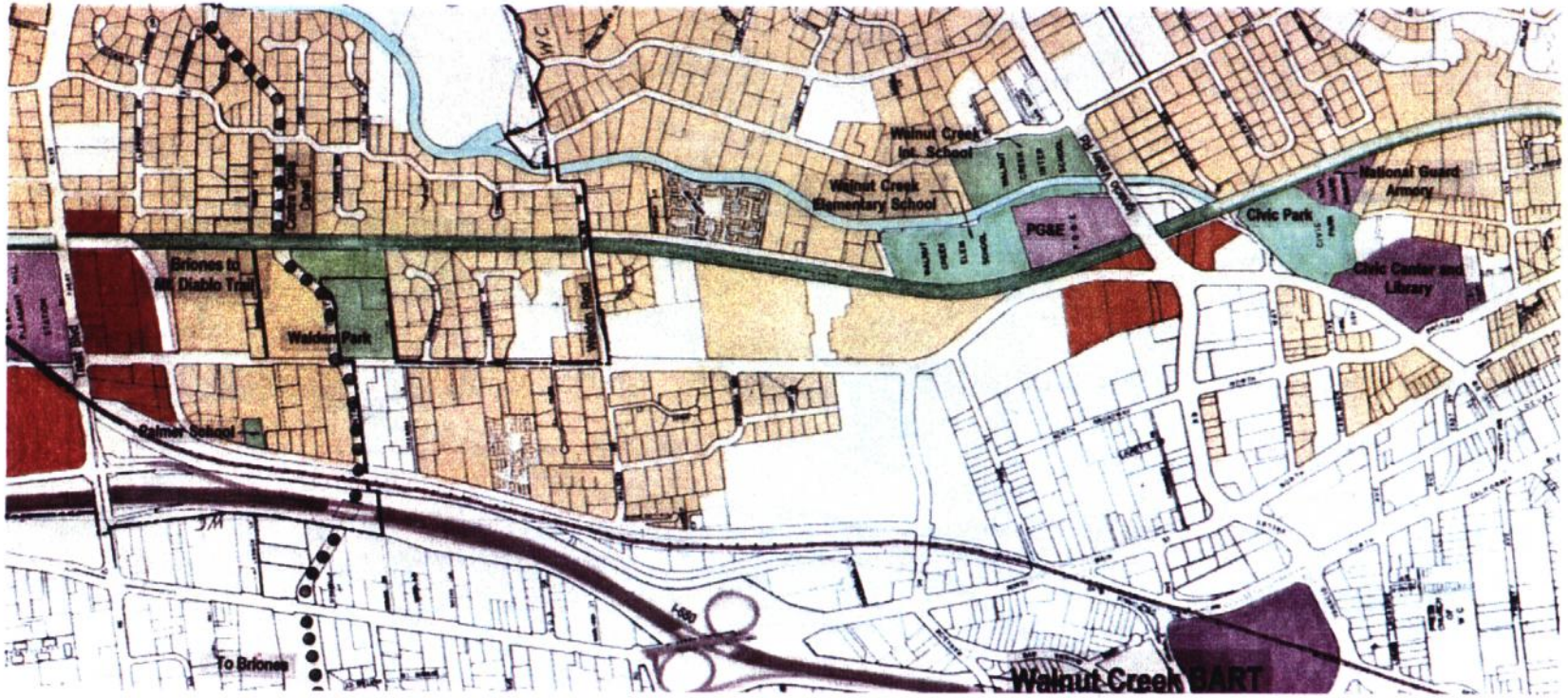


Map 3 – Pleasant Hill BART to Civic Center (Walnut Creek)

Looking north from Walnut Creek Elementary School.

Suburban

Suburban



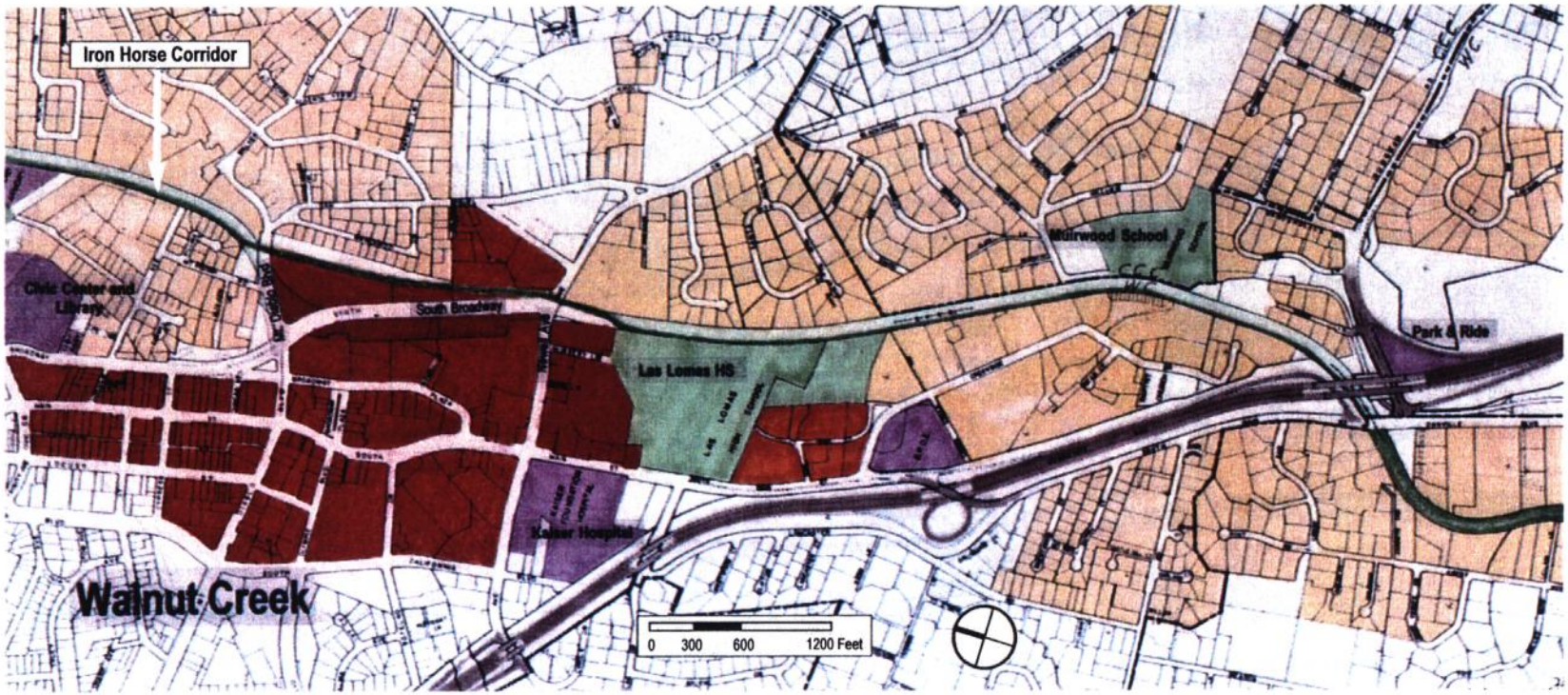
Map 4 - Civic Center to Rudgear Road (Alamo)

Looking south from Las Lomas High School. South Broadway sound wall is on the left.

Residential
Parks/Schools
Institutional
Retail
Office/Job Center

Suburban

Suburban → | ← Rural



Map 5 – Rudgear Road to Ridgewood Road (Alamo)

Looking south from Ridgewood Road. Las Trampas Ridge is to the right.

Rural

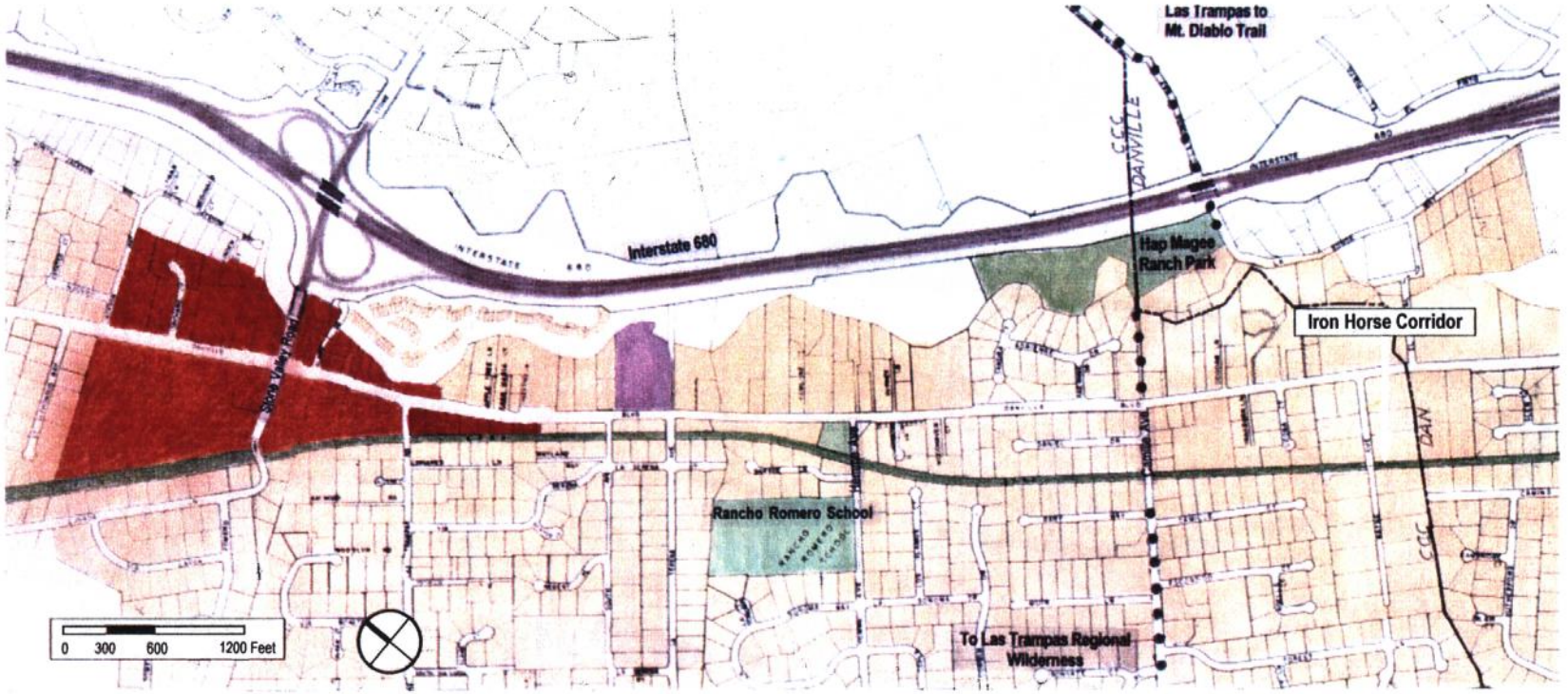
Rural

Map 6 – Stone Valley Road (Alamo) to Danville Town Limit

Looking north from Stone Valley Road. Stone Valley Shopping Center is on right.

Residential
Parks/Schools
Institutional
Retail
Office/Job Center

Rural Rural

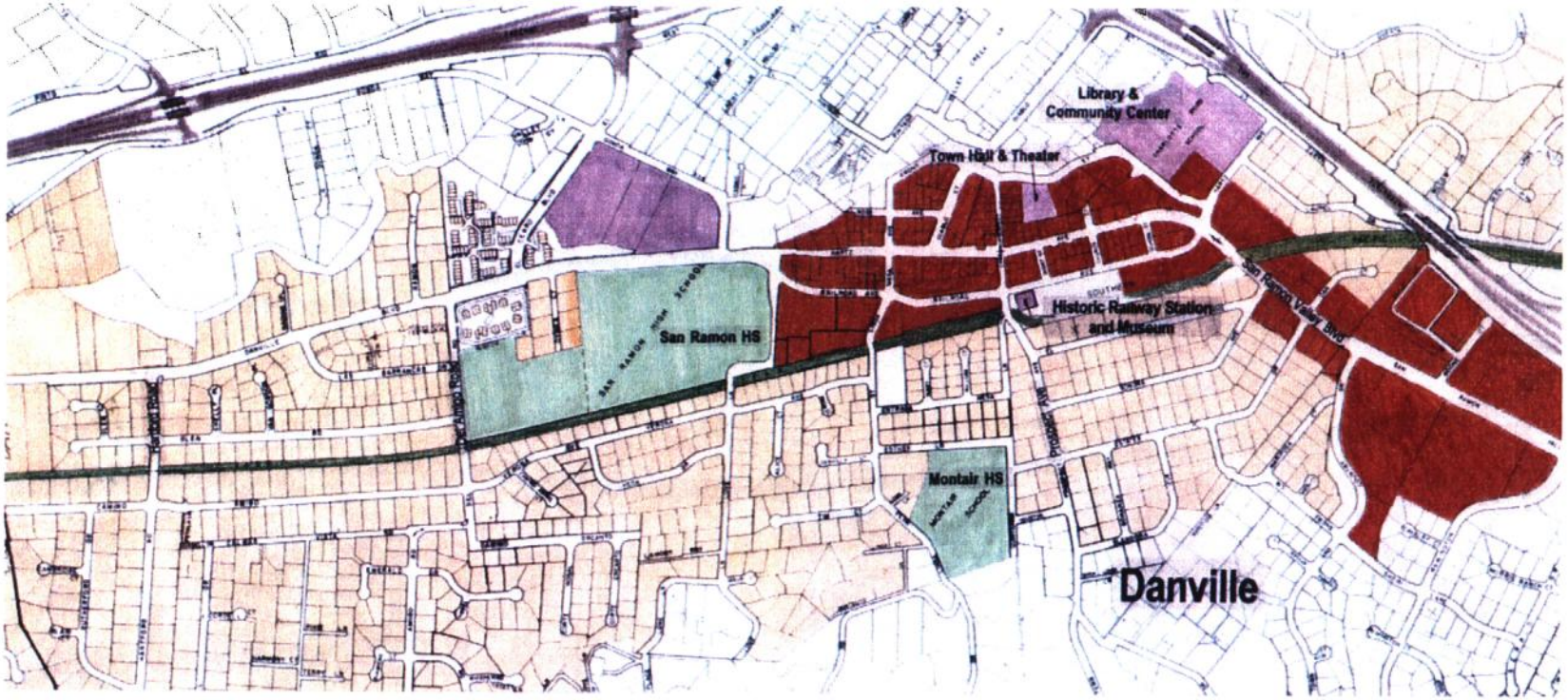


Map 7 – Hartford Road to Downtown Danville (at I-680)

Looking north from Love Lane with volunteer Bike Patrol.

Rural

Rural

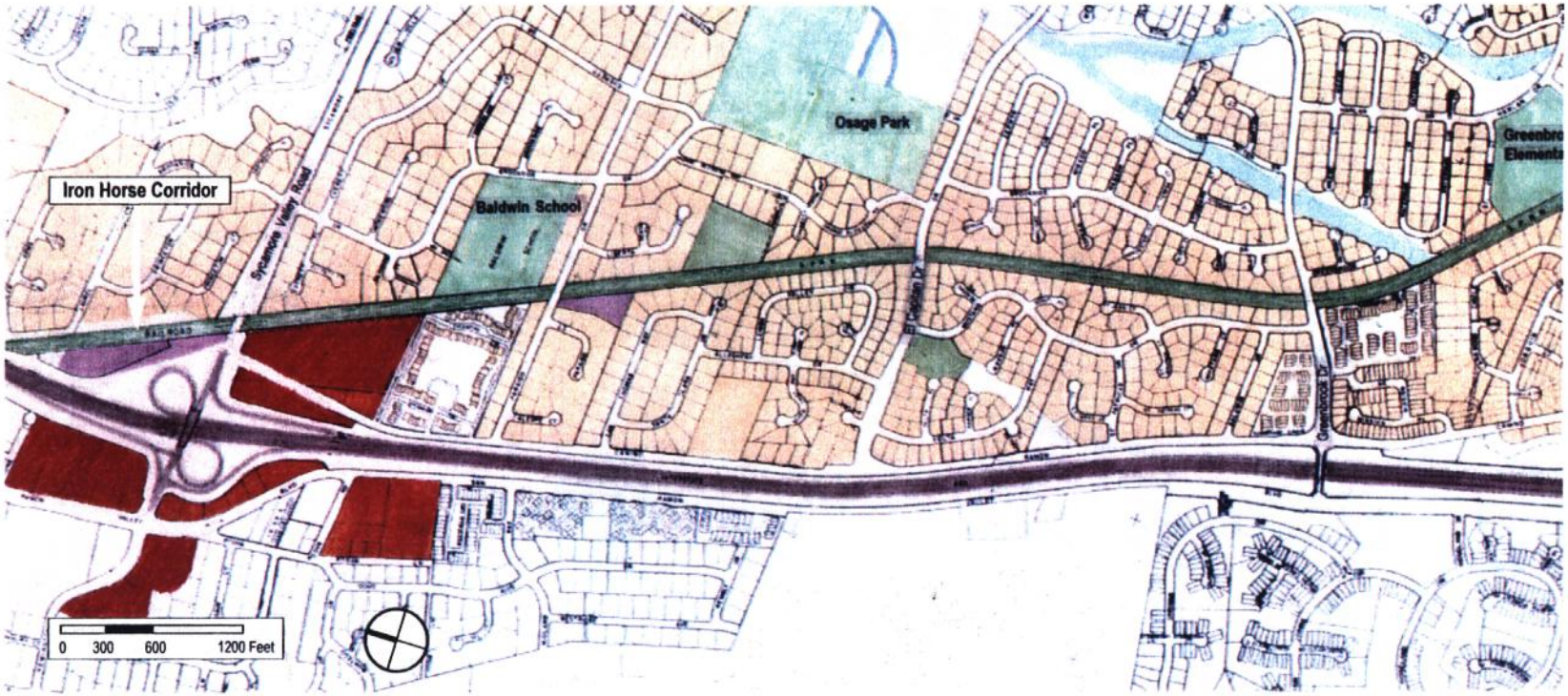


Map 8 – Sycamore Valley Road to Greenbrook Drive (Danville)

Looking north towards the El Capitan Drive intersection.

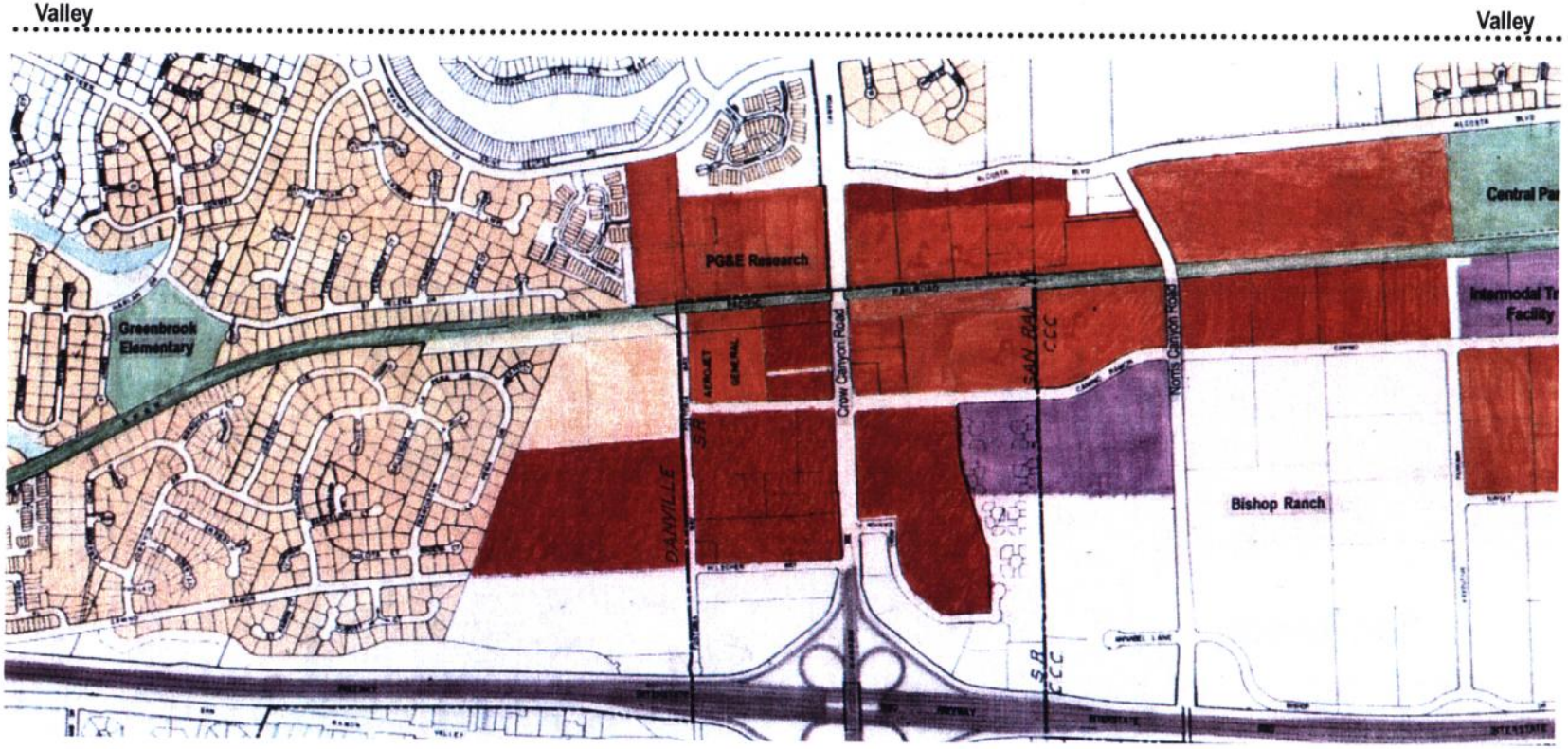
Residential
Parks/Schools
Institutional
Retail
Office/Job Center

Rural → | ← Valley



Map 9 – Greenbrook Elementary School to Bishop Ranch (San Ramon)

Looking north from 200 yards north of Fostoria Way.



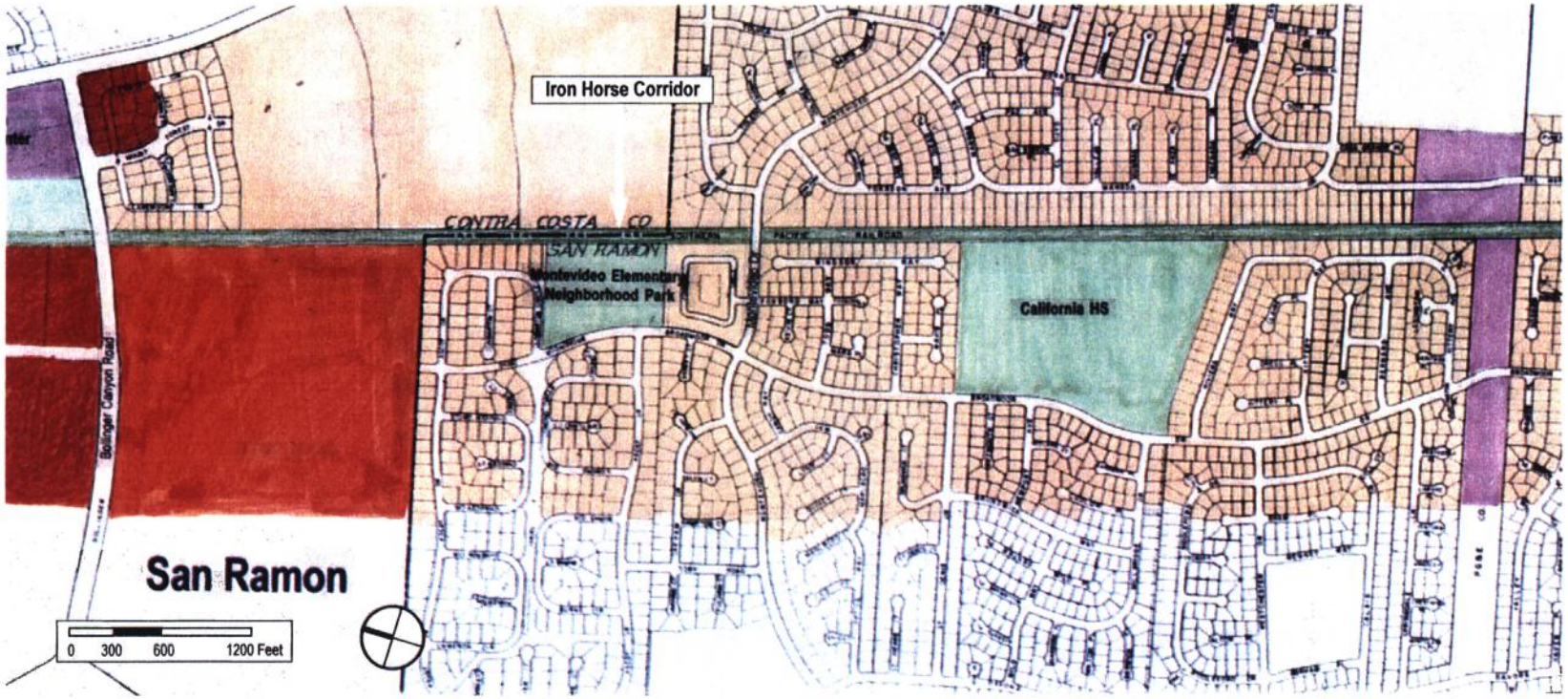
Map 10 – Bishop Ranch to California High School

Looking north from Bollinger Canyon Road. Bishop Ranch is on the left.

Residential
Parks/Schools
Institutional
Retail
Office/Job Center

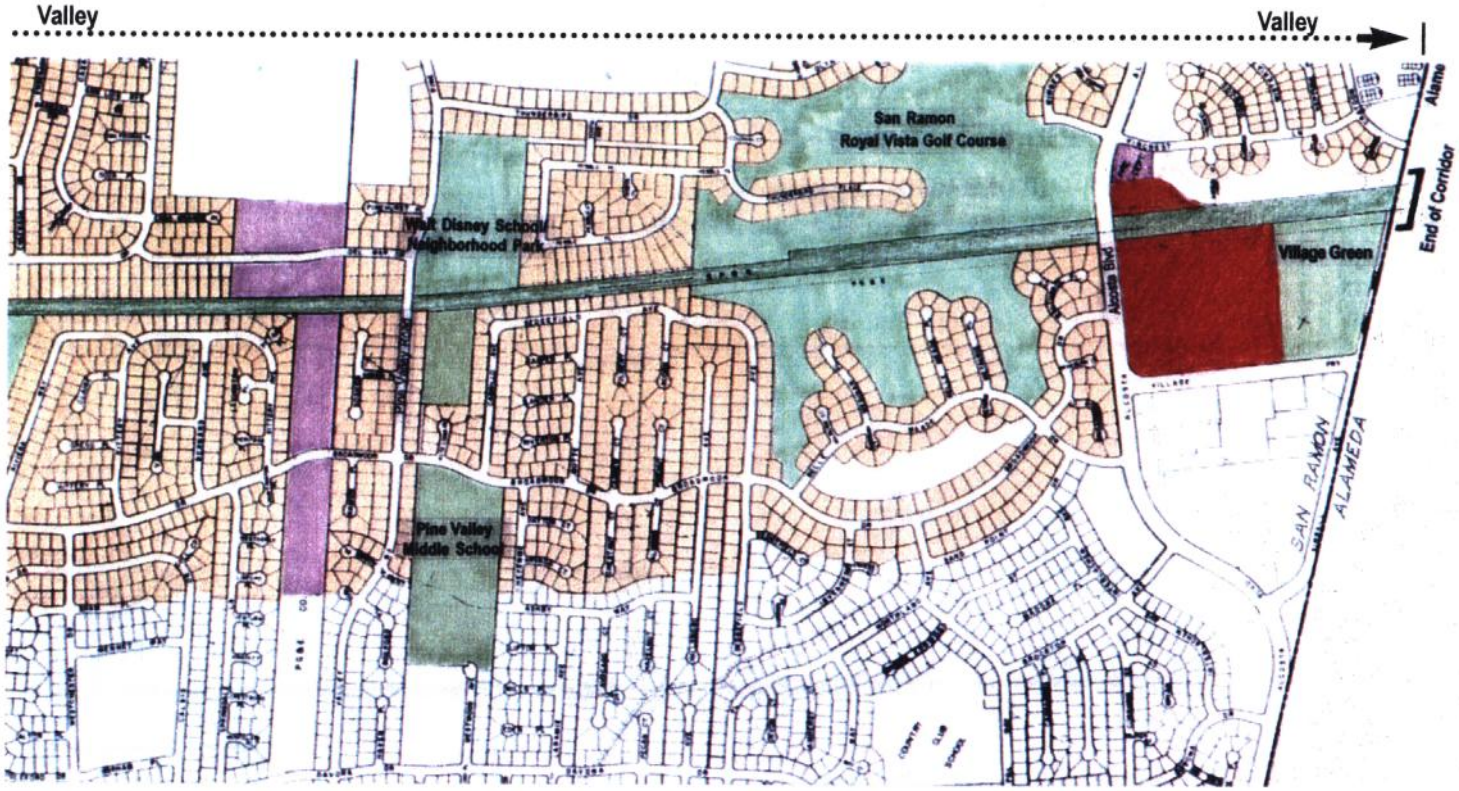
Valley

Valley



Map 11 - California High School to Alameda County Line

Looking south toward Livermore Valley near the Alameda County line.



2.5 Typical Corridor Sections

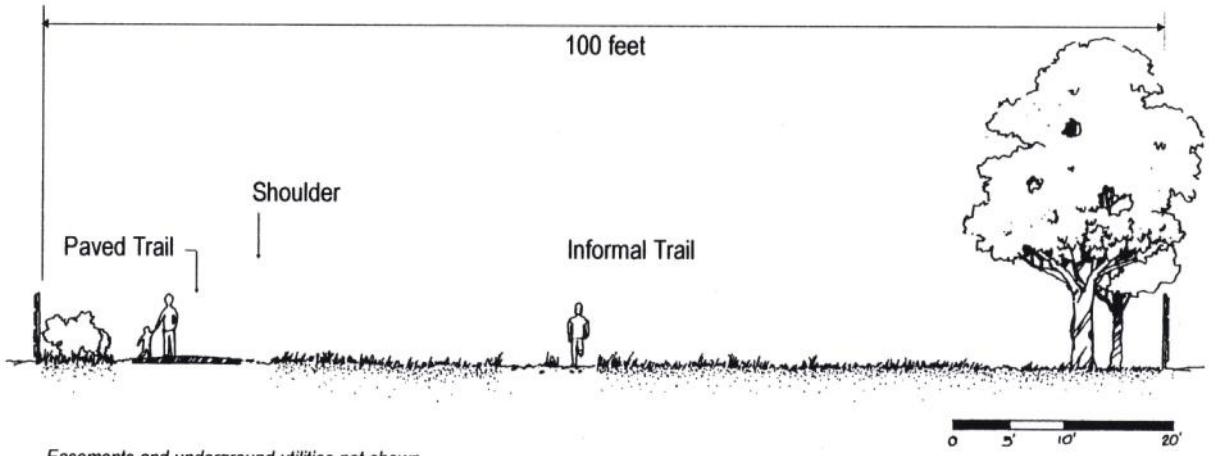
The corridor width varies along its length. For most of the right-of-way, it is either 100 or 50 feet. In some areas it is between 50 and 70 feet wide and in others, less than 50 feet. For the purpose of understanding design opportunities and constraints, the Corridor has been categorized into five different cross sections which typify most conditions. Right-of-way is abbreviated ROW. The five typical conditions are:

Type 1-A: 100 Feet ROW/Trail on One Side (close to fences)
Type 1-B: 100 Feet ROW/Trail in Middle of Corridor
Type 2-A: 50 Feet ROW/Trail on One Side
Type 2-B: 50 Feet ROW/Trail in Middle of Corridor
Type 3: 30 Feet or less of Corridor

► Corridor Type 1-A

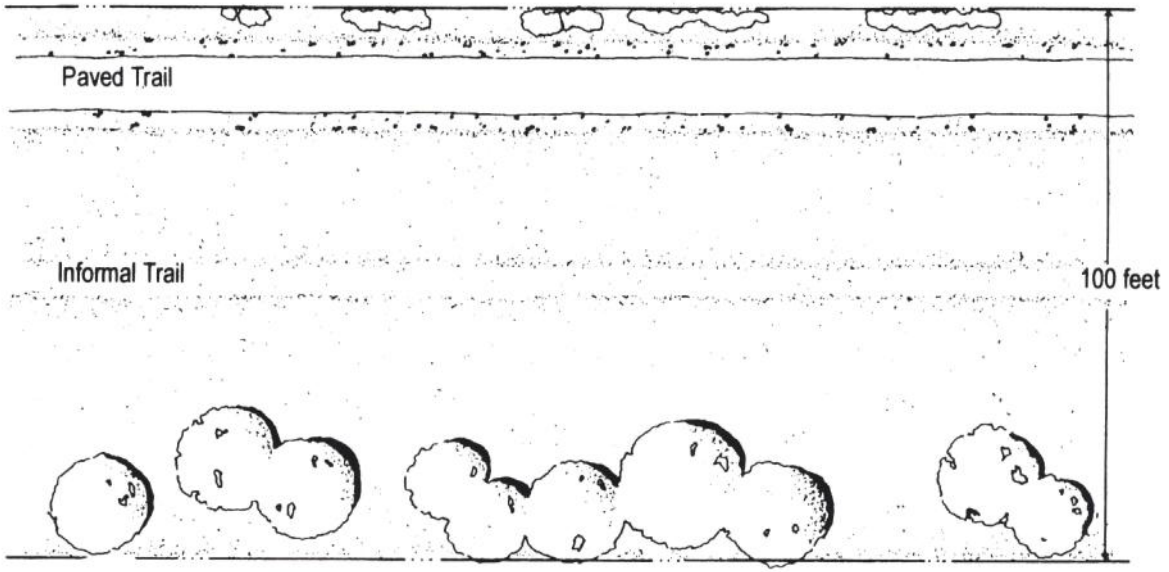
- 100 feet wide or greater ROW.
- Trail is close to one side of ROW.

Cross-Section: Type 1-A

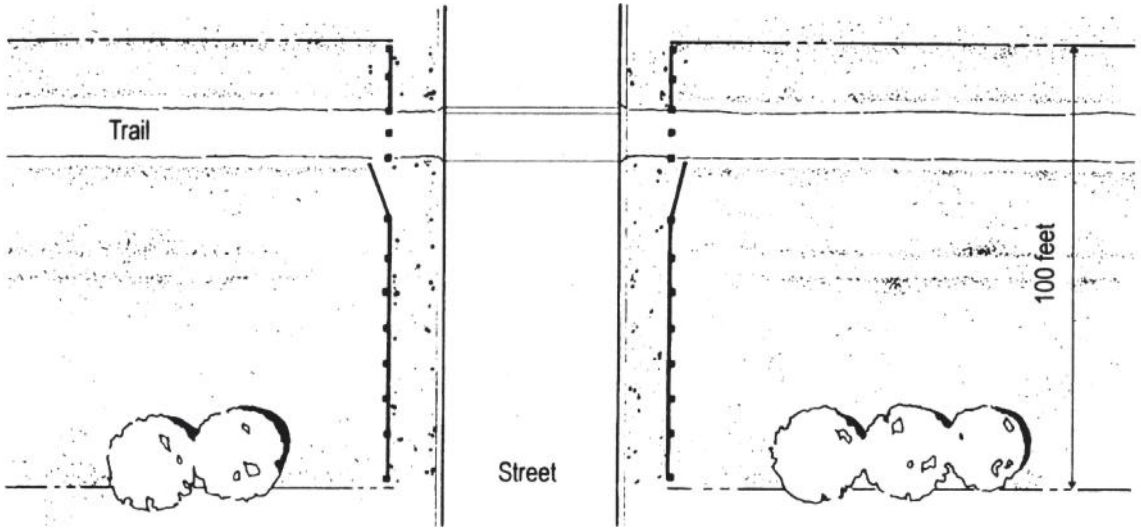


Easements and underground utilities not shown.

Plan View: Type 1-A



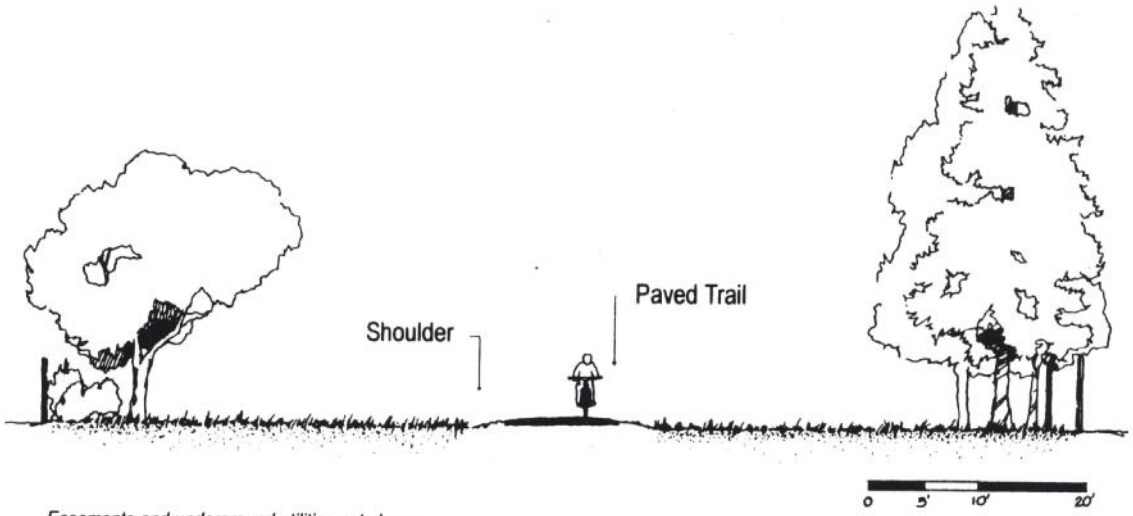
Plan View: Type 1-A at Street Intersection



▶ Corridor Type 1-B

- 100 feet wide or greater ROW.
- Trail is at or close to center of ROW.

Cross-Section: Type 1-B

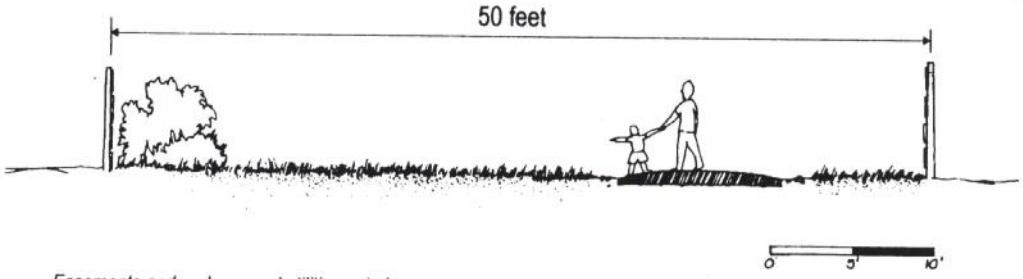


Easements and underground utilities not shown.

▶ Corridor Type 2-A

- 50 to 70 feet wide ROW.
- Trail is at one side of the corridor.

Cross-Section: Type 2-A

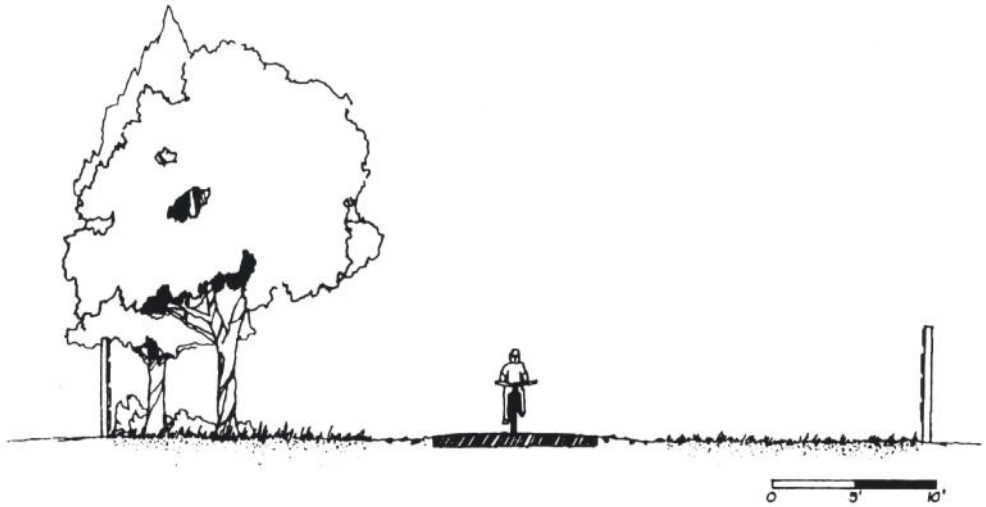


Easements and underground utilities not shown.

Corridor Type 2-B

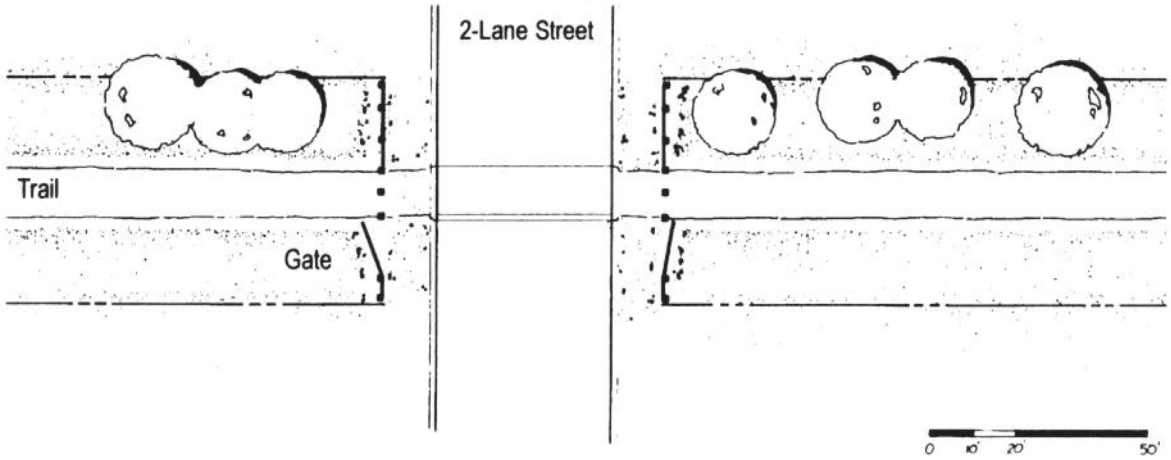
- 50 to 70 feet wide ROW.
- Trail is at or close to center of ROW.

Cross-Section: Type 2-B



Easements and underground utilities not shown.

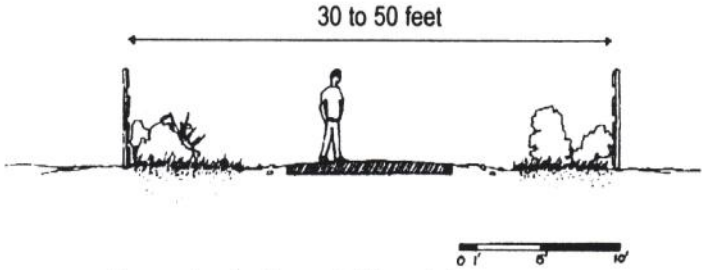
Plan View: Type 2-B at Street Intersection



▶ Corridor Type 3

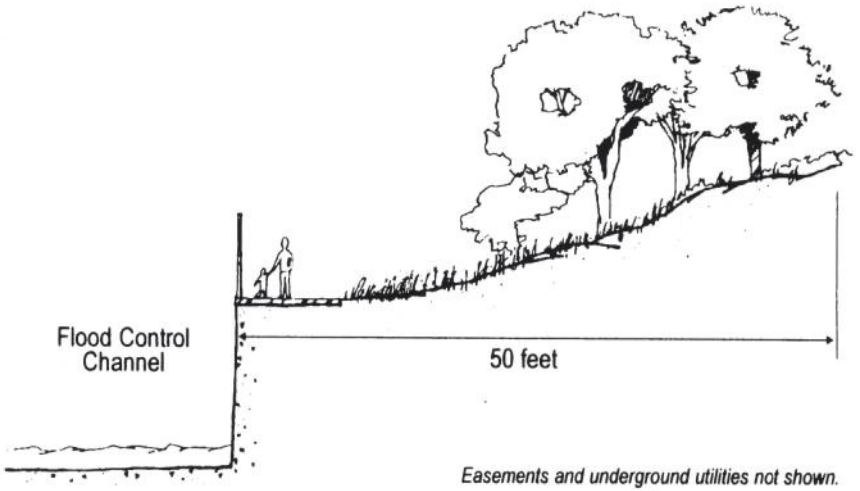
- 30 to 50 feet wide ROW. Area for landscaping is less than 10 feet.
- Trail location varies within the ROW.
- Note: this condition occurs where the trail is the only level area in the ROW. Typically a creek channel or roadway uses the ROW and 10 to 20 feet remain for the trail.

Cross-Section: Type 3



Easements and underground utilities not shown.

Cross-Section: Type 3 at Walnut Creek Channel



Easements and underground utilities not shown.

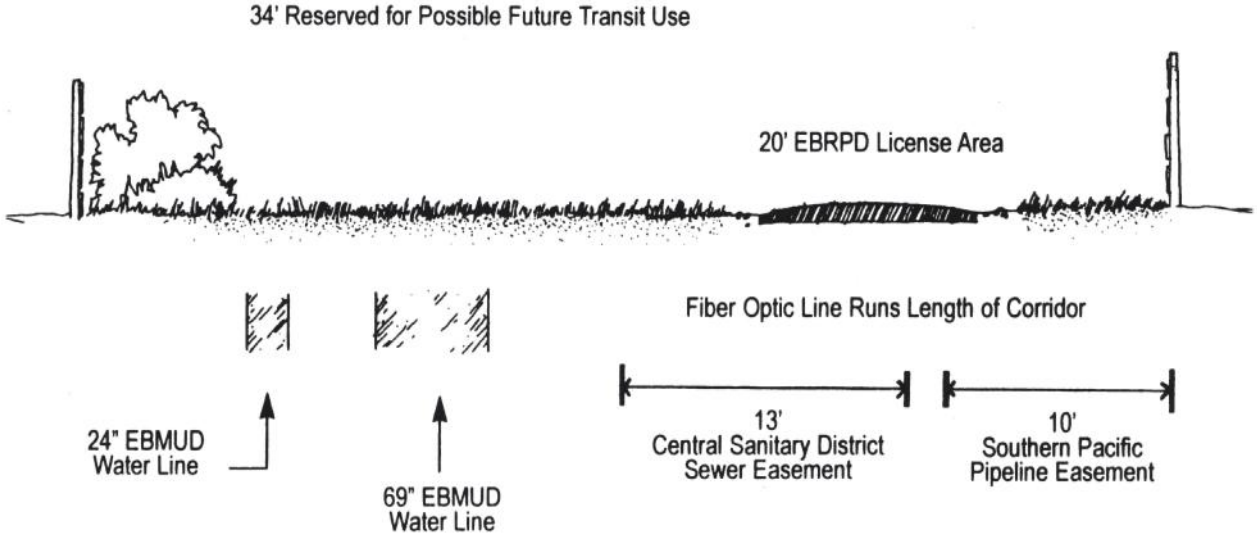
2.6 Typical Corridor Underground Utilities

The Iron Horse Corridor is used for public utilities, pipelines, transportation facilities, and a recreational trail. Background - Part 2 of this document identifies and describes the agreements the County has with various public and private entities that maintain utilities and hold easements in the Corridor. The presence and location of various utilities and easements vary widely along the 18.5-mile right-of-way. The County's *Record of Survey* prepared in December 1997 documents the location of the existing easements.

Easement holders have the right and responsibility to safely maintain their underground utilities. To ensure safe maintenance, certain plantings and construction of some structures are not permitted. Specific terms of permissible activities within easements are subject to the easement holder's agreement with the County. (Refer to Appendix E.)

Illustrated below is an example of multiple easements within one section of the Corridor.

Conceptual Cross-Section of Corridor Showing Utilities and Easements



(EBMUD: East Bay Municipal Utility District.)

Not to scale. Diagram for illustrative purposes only.